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ABSTRACT

This lesson introduces the study of insects in science by using poetry. Students work in cooperative groups to prepare choral poetry readings and present factual information on an assigned insect to the class. The choral poetry readings also serve to increase fluency in English-as-a-second-language students. During four 30-minute sessions, students will: participate in choral poetry readings; work cooperatively in groups to create a choral reading of an assigned poem; use a graphic organizer to gather factual information about a particular insect; and present choral poetry readings and research information orally to the class. The instructional plan, lists of resources, student assessment/reflection activities, and a list of National Council of Teachers of English/International Reading Association (NCTE/IRA) Standards addressed in the lesson are included. A research information sheet is attached. (PM)

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Multipurpose Poetry: Introducing Science Concepts and Increasing Fluency

ED 480 244

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Grade Band

3-5

Estimated Lesson Time

Four 30-minute sessions

Overview

Poetry is a fun and unintimidating way for ESL students to develop their oral fluency. Poetry can be read aloud chorally or individually, and can also serve as an introduction to other forms of literature or content area studies. In this lesson, students work in small groups to develop a choral reading of two poems about an assigned insect. The poems serve as an introduction to a research investigation (via the Internet) about the insect. Students compile factual information about the insect and present the information, along with their choral poetry readings to the class.

From Theory to Practice

Hadaway, N.L., Vardell, S.M., & Young, T.A. (2001). Scaffolding oral language development through poetry for students learning English. *The Reading Teacher, 54*, 796–806.

- ESL students need frequent opportunities to develop their oral language fluency. Poetry provides a nonthreatening way for students to participate and practice oral fluency.

  The brevity of poetry provides a scaffold for students to transition into more complicated and longer texts.

  The rhythm and repetition of poetry provides support for students learning the English language.

  Poetry provides a "powerful anticipatory set" for the introduction of concepts and content across the curriculum.

Student Objectives

Students will:

- Participate in choral poetry readings
- Work cooperatively in groups to create a choral reading of an assigned poem
- Use a graphic organizer to gather factual information about a particular insect
- Present choral poetry readings and research information orally to the class

Resources

- Research information worksheet

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- eNature.com: Insects & Spiders
- *Insectlopedia* by Douglas Florian (Voyager Books, 2002)
- *Joyful Noise: Poems for Two Voices* by Paul Fleischman (Harpercollins Juvenile Books, 1992)
- Access to the Internet
- Chart paper and markers

Instructional Plan

Preparation

1. Copy the following poems from the two books listed in RESOURCES onto chart paper.

   From *Insectlopedia:*

   "The Treehoppers"

   "The Whirligig Beetles"

   "The Crickets"

   "The Mayfly"

   From *Joyful Noise:*

   "Fireflies"

   "Whirligig Beetles"

   "House Crickets"

   "Mayflies"

2. Before teaching this lesson, students should have had multiple experiences with choral poetry readings. They should be familiar with different choral reading formats and comfortable working in small cooperative groups.

Instruction and Activities

Day 1

1. Begin the lesson by discussing poetry with students. What do they know about poems? What kind of poems have they read before? Tell students that they are going to be reading some poems about insects.

2. Display the poem "The Treehoppers" from *Insectlopedia*. Read the poem aloud and ask students to listen and follow along as you point to each word. When you finish reading the poem, tell students that you are going to read it again and invite them to join along.

3. Once the poem has been read 2 times, ask students to help you create a choral reading. Ask for

their suggestions (e.g., students read every other line, girls read one line and boys read another, half the class reads one line and half the class reads another). Perform the choral reading.

4. Repeat steps 2 and 3 with the poem "Fireflies" from *Joyful Noise*. The poems in this book are written for "two voices;" that is, they are written for two people to read together. You will need to take this into consideration when planning the choral readings. Some of the lines in the poem are meant to be read simultaneously by two people or groups. You should familiarize students with the format of the poems from *Joyful Noise* since they will be reading them in small groups during Day 2.

Day 2

1. Reread the poems from the previous day in a new choral format. Ask a student volunteer to follow along with a pointer as the poem is read.

2. Divide students into 3 cooperative groups, and assign each group an insect (i.e., whirligig beetles, crickets, and mayflies) and each student in the group a task. Suggested tasks include recorder, timekeeper, mediator (makes sure that everyone in the group has a chance to talk), and task manager (makes sure that the groups stays on task). The assigned tasks should enable students to work more cooperatively together and to practice teamwork skills.

   Once students are in their designated groups, give each group the chart papers with their poems written on them. Each group should have two poems: one from Insectlopedia and one from *Joyful Noise*.

3. Have students read the two poems several times in their groups. Students should develop a choral reading for each poem. Reinforce to students that all group members must participate in the choral reading. Allow students the freedom of choosing how they want to perform the choral reading.

4. Allow students time to practice their choral readings with their small groups until they feel comfortable with the poems.

Day 3

1. Divide students into their small groups and have them run through their choral readings from the previous day.

2. Pass out the research information worksheet and tell students that they are going to work individually to find information about the insects in their poems.

3. Explain how students should complete the chart and direct them to the following webpages from eNature.com, a resource provided by the National Wildlife Federation:

   · For information on whirligig beetles

   · For information on mayflies

   · For information on crickets

4. When students have completed the research information chart, have them return to their small groups to discuss and compare information. Collect the research charts.

Day 4

Have each small group perform the choral readings of their poems for the class, and ask each student in the group to contribute one fact about his or her insect.

Extensions

- Have students write a short report about their assigned insect.
- Create groups with one member of each insect group and have each student teach their group members about their insect ("expert" groups).
- Ask students to create a model of their insect and label the insect's body parts.
- Ask students to choose a favorite poem to read aloud and share with the class.

Student Assessment/Reflections

- Assess the development of students' oral language skills informally through observation.

  1. Were students comfortable performing the choral readings?
  2. Did they read fluently?
  3. Did they enjoy reading the poems aloud?

- Use students' research information worksheets to assess their knowledge about the insect and research skills. Check to make sure that each section of the worksheet is filled in with accurate information.
- Evaluate students' cooperative learning skills. Did students stay on task and complete the assignment while working in groups?

IRA/NCTE Standards

4 - Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.

7 - Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of sources (e.g., print and nonprint texts, artifacts, people) to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience.

8 - Students use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.

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read•write•think

International Reading Association NCTE marcopolo

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RESEARCH INFORMATION

Name _____ Date _____

Name of insect: _____

What does your insect look like?	Where does your insect live?	What does your insect eat?	What other interesting facts did you find about your insect?
Size	Area and range	Food	
Appearance	Habitat		

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